

REMARKS

In the outstanding Office action dated November 2, 2006, claims 17-20 and 24-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Little (4,997,424). Claims 27-33 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but were deemed allowable if rewritten in independent form. In rejecting claims 17-20 and 24-26 in view of the Little patent, the Examiner stated that "Little discloses an elongated catheter 12 member having a distal end and a proximal end, the catheter handle H secured to the elongated catheter member, and a platform 26 removably secured to the catheter handle." It is respectfully submitted, however, that the Little patent does not teach the subject matter recited in independent claim 17 or its rejected dependent claims 18-20 and 24-26.

Significantly, the Little patent is directed towards a slitter for slitting an introducer tube portion. The slitter 10 is described as including a handle section H having a lower edge portion 16 and further including a knife blade 22. The lower edge portion 16 of the slitter 10 is shown being placed adjacent a tubular axial portion 12 of a catheter and the knife blade 22 is described as being placed into engagement with a proximal portion 24a of a tube portion 24 of an introducer coaxially configured about the tubular axial portion 12 of a catheter. The knife blade 22 is then employed to slit the tubular portion 24 of the introducer.

Accordingly, contrary to the position taken by the Examiner in the outstanding Office action, handle section H of slitter 10 clearly does not define a catheter handle secured to an elongated catheter member as is recited in independent claim 17 as well as dependent claims 18-20 and 24-26. Furthermore, it is respectfully submitted that tab portion 26 of the introducer disclosed in the Little patent clearly does not define a platform removably secured to a catheter handle as is recited in independent claim 17 and its dependent claims. Even assuming the

Examiner is correct that handle H of splitter 10 constitutes a catheter handle, handle H is clearly not removably secured to tab portion 26.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that each of pending claims 17-20 and 24-26 are not anticipated by the Little reference. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that each of pending claims 17-20 and 24-33 can be passed to issue.

CONCLUSION

Applicants have attempted to completely respond to the rejections set forth in the outstanding Office action. In view of the above remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the application be reconsidered, the claims allowed and the application passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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